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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Remington et al.	:	
Application No. 10/797,450	:	DECISION ON PETITION
Filed: March 10, 2004	:	
Attorney Docket No. 1-16235	:	

This is a decision on the "PETITION UNDER § 1.181," filed July 7, 2004, which is properly treated as a petition under § 1.53(e)(2). Applicants request that the above-identified nonprovisional application be accorded a filing date of March 10, 2004, with no drawings present in the application.

The petition is **GRANTED**.

Application papers in the above-identified nonprovisional application were deposited on March 10, 2004. However, on May 27, 2004, the Initial Patent Examination Division mailed applicants a "Notice of Incomplete Nonprovisional Application," stating that the application papers deposited March 10, 2004 had not been accorded a filing date because the application was deposited without drawings.

In response, applicants filed the instant petition. Applicants seek assignment of the filing date of the originally submitted application, namely March 10, 2004, on the basis that the inadvertently omitted drawings are not necessary for understanding the subject matter sought to be patented. Applicants state that all of the claims of the present application are method claims related to thin film deposition.

RELEVANT STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

35 U.S.C. 111(a)(4) provides that:

The filing date of an application shall be the date on which the specification and any required drawing are received in the Patent and Trademark Office.

However, as stated in MPEP 601.01(f)

It has been USPTO practice to treat an application that contains at least one process or method claim as an application for which a drawing is not necessary for an understanding of the invention under 35 U.S.C. 113 (first sentence).

In regards to withdrawing the Notice, MPEP § 601.01(f) also states that:

a nonprovisional application having at least one claim ..., directed to subject matter discussed above for which a drawing is usually not considered essential for a filing date, describing drawing figure(s) in the specification, but filed without drawings will be treated as an application without all of the drawing figures referred to in the specification as discussed in MPEP § 601.01(g), so long as the application contains something that can be construed as a written description.

And, MPEP § 601.01(g) further provides that:

If the application is filed without all of the drawing figure(s) referred to in the specification, ..., OIPE will mail a "Notice of Omitted Item(s)" indicating that the application papers so deposited have been accorded a filing date, but are lacking some of the figures of the drawings described in the specification.

DISCUSSION

A review of the application confirms that as filed it contained at least one method claim. Pursuant to § 601.01(f), a drawing is not considered essential for a filing date. Thus, the application is entitled to a filing date without drawings present in the application.

However, as the specification in the instant nonprovisional application contained reference to drawing figures 1 through 4 (Brief Description of Drawings, p. 3 of Specification), mailing of a Notice requiring submission of those drawings was appropriate. The Office should have mailed a "Notice of Omitted Items" rather than a "Notice of Incomplete Nonprovisional Application." The "Notice of Incomplete Nonprovisional Application" mailed May 27, 2004, was mailed in error and is hereby withdrawn.

In view thereof, the application as originally deposited without drawings is entitled to a filing date of March 10, 2004.

Given the basis for granting the petition, the petition fee is being refunded to Deposit Account No. 13-1816, as authorized.

CONCLUSION

The Office of Initial Patent Examination (OIPE) has been advised of this decision. Pursuant to this decision, the application has

been referred to OIPE for further processing with a filing date of March 10, 2004 and for indication in Office records, as appropriate, that "0" sheets of drawings were present on filing.

Telephone inquiries specific to this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (703) 305-0309.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Johnson", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Nancy Johnson
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions